NUMB. XIV.

The SPECTATOR.

——Teque his, Infælix, exue monſtris. Ovid.

Friday, March 16. 1711.

I Was reflecting this Morning upon the Spirit and Humour of the publick Diverſions Five and twenty Years ago, and thoſe of the preſent Time; and lamented to my ſelf, that tho' in thoſe Days they neglected their Morality, they kept up their Good Senſe; but that the *beau Monde* at preſent, is only grown more childiſh, not more innocent, than the former. While I was in this Train of Thought, an odd Fellow whoſe Face I have often ſeen at the Play-houſe, gave me the following Letter with theſe Words, Sir, *The Lyon preſents his humble Service to you, and deſired me to give this into your own Hands.*

From my Den in the Hay-Market, March 15.

SIR,

'I Have read all your Papers, and have ſtifled my 'Reſentment againſt your Reflections upon 'Operas, till that of this Day, wherein you plainly 'inſinuate that Signior *Grimaldi* and my ſelf have 'a Correſpondence more friendly than is conſiſtent 'with the Valour of his Character, or the Fierce-'neſs of mine. I deſire you would for your own 'Sake forbear ſuch Intimations for the future; and 'muſt ſay it is a great Piece of Ill-nature in you, to 'ſhew ſo great an Eſteem for a Foreigner, and to 'diſcourage a *Lyon* that is your own Country-man.

'I take notice of your Fable of the Lyon and 'Man, but am ſo equally concerned in that Mat-'ter, that I ſhall not be offended to which ſoever 'of the Animals the Superiority is given. You 'have miſrepreſented me in ſaying that I am a 'Country-Gentleman who act only for my Diver-'ſion; whereas, had I ſtill the ſame Woods to range 'in which I once had when I was a Fox-hunter, 'I ſhould not reſign my Manhood for a Mainte-'nance; and aſſure you, as low as my Circum-'ſtances are at preſent, I am ſo much a Man of Ho-'nour, that I would ſcorn to be any Beaſt for Bread 'but a Lyon.

Yours, &c.

I had no ſooner ended this, than one of my Land-lady's Children brought me in ſeveral others, with ſome of which I ſhall make up my preſent Pa-per, they all having a Tendency to the ſame Subject, *viz.* the Elegance of our preſent Diver-ſions.

SIR, *Covent-Garden, March* 13.

'I Have been for twenty Years Under-Sexton 'of this Pariſh of St. *Paul's Covent-Gar-'den*, and have not miſſed tolling in to Prayers 'ſix times in all thoſe Years; which Office I have 'performed to my great Satisfaction, till this Fort-'night laſt paſt, during which Time I find my 'Congregation take the Warning of my Bell, 'Morning and Evening, to go to a Puppet-ſhow 'ſet forth by one *Powel* under the *Piazzas*. By 'this Means I have not only loſt my two Cuſtom-'ers, whom I uſed to place for ſix Pence a Piece 'over-againſt Mrs *Rachel Eyebright*, but Mrs *Ra-'chel* her ſelf is gone thither alſo. There now 'appear among us none but a few ordinary People, 'who come to Church only to ſay their Prayers, 'ſo that I have no Work worth ſpeaking of but on '*Sundays*. I have placed my Son at the *Piazzas* to 'acquaint the Ladies that the Bell rings for Church, 'and that it ſtands on the other Side of the *Gar-'den*; but they only laugh at the Child.

'I deſire you would lay this before all the World, 'that I may not be made ſuch a Tool for the Fu-'ture, and that Punchinello may chuſe Hours leſs 'canonical. As things are now, Mr. *Powell* has a full 'Congregation, while we have a very thin Houſe; 'which if you can Remedy, you will very much 'oblige, *Sir*,

Your, &c.

The following Epiſtle I find is from the Under-taker of the Maſquerade.

SIR,

'I Have obſerved the Rules of my Maſque ſo 'carefully, (in not enquiring into Perſons) 'that I cannot tell whether you were one of the 'Company or not laſt *Tuesday*; but if you were 'not, and ſtill deſign to come, I deſire you would, 'for your own Entertainment, pleaſe to admoniſh 'the Town, that all Perſons indifferently are not 'fit for this Sort of Diverſion. I could wiſh, 'Sir, you could make them underſtand, that it is 'a kind of acting to go in Maſquerade, and a Man 'ſhould be able to ſay or do things proper for the 'Dreſs in which he appears. We have now and 'then Rakes in the Habit of Roman Senators, 'and grave Politicians in the Dreſs of Rakes. The

'Miſfor-

‘ Misfortune of the thing is, that People dreſs themſelves in what they have a Mind to be, and not ‘ what they are fit for. There is not a Girl in ‘ the Town, but let her have her Will in going ‘ to a Maſque, and ſhe ſhall dreſs as a Shepherdeſs. ‘ But let me beg of them to read the Arcadia, or ‘ ſome other good Romance, before they appear ‘ in any ſuch Character at my Houſe. The laſt ‘ Day we preſented; every Body was ſo raſhly habited, that when they came to ſpeak to each other, ‘ a Nymph with a Crook had not a Word to ſay but ‘ in the pert Stile of the Pit Bawdry; and a Man ‘ in the Habit of a Philoſopher was ſpeechleſs, till ‘ an Occaſion offered of expreſſing himſelf in the ‘ Refuſe of the Tyring-Rooms. We had a Judge ‘ that danced a Minuet, with a Quaker for his Partner, while half a dozen Harlequins ſtood by as ‘ Spectators: A *Turk* drank me off two Bottles of ‘ Wine, and a *Jew* eat me up half a Ham of Bacon. If I can bring my Deſign to bear, and make ‘ the Maskers preſerve their Characters in my Aſſemblies, I hope you will allow there is a Foundation laid for more elegant and improving Gallantries than any the Town at preſent affords; and ‘ conſequently, that you will give your Approbation to the Endeavours of,

Sir,

Your moſt obedient humble Servant.

I am very glad the following Epiſtle obliges me to mention Mr. *Powell* a ſecond Time in the ſame Paper; for indeed there cannot be too great Encouragement given to his Skill in Motions, provided he is under proper Reſtrictions.

SIR,

‘ THE Opera at the *Hay-Market*, and that under ‘ the little *Piazza* in *Covent-Garden*, being at ‘ preſent the Two leading Diverſions of the Town; ‘ and Mr. *Powell* profeſſing in his Advertiſements to ‘ ſet up *Whittington and his Cat* againſt *Rinaldo and Armida*, my Curioſity led me the Beginning of laſt ‘ Week to view both theſe Performances, and make ‘ my Obſervations upon them.

‘ Firſt therefore, I cannot but obſerve that Mr. ‘ *Powell* wiſely forbearing to give his Company a ‘ Bill of Fare before-hand, every Scene is new and ‘ unexpected; whereas it is certain, that the Undertakers of the *Hay-Market*, having raiſed too great ‘ an Expectation in their printed Opera, very much ‘ diſappoint their Audience on the Stage.

‘ The King of *Jeruſalem* is obliged to come from ‘ the City on foot, inſtead of being drawn in a ‘ triumphant Chariot by white Horſes, as my Opera-Book had promiſed me; and thus while I expected *Armida*'s Dragons ſhould ruſh forward towards ‘ *Argantes*, I found the Hero was obliged to go to ‘ *Armida*, and hand her out of her Coach. We had ‘ alſo but a very ſhort Allowance of Thunder and ‘ Lightning; tho' I cannot in this Place omit doing ‘ Juſtice to the Boy who had the Direction of the ‘ Two painted Dragons, and made them ſpit Fire ‘ and Smoke: He flaſh'd out his Roſin in ſuch juſt ‘ Proportions and in ſuch due Time, that I could not ‘ forbear conceiving Hopes of his being one Day a ‘ moſt excellent Player. I ſaw indeed but Two ‘ things wanting to render his whole Action compleat, I mean the keeping his Head a little lower, ‘ and hiding his Candle.

‘ I obſerve that Mr. *Powell* and the Undertakers had both the ſame Thought, and I think, much ‘ about the ſame time, of introducing Animals on ‘ their ſeveral Stages, tho' indeed with very different Succeſs. The Sparrows and Chaffinches at ‘ the *Hay-Market* fly as yet very irregularly over the ‘ Stage; and inſtead of perching on the Trees and ‘ performing their Parts, theſe young Actors either ‘ get into the Galleries or put out the Candles; ‘ whereas Mr. *Powell* has ſo well diſciplin'd his Pig, ‘ that in the firſt Scene he and Punch dance a Minuet together. I am informed however, that Mr. ‘ *Powell* reſolves to excell his Adverſaries in their ‘ own Way; and introduce Larks in his next Opera ‘ of *Suſanna or Innocence betray'd*, which will be ‘ exhibited next Week with a Pair of new Elders.

‘ The Moral of Mr. *Powell*'s Drama is violated I confeſs by Punch's national Reflections ‘ on the *French*, and King *Harry*'s laying his Leg ‘ upon his Queen's Lap in too ludicrous a manner ‘ before ſo great an Aſſembly.

‘ As to the Mechaniſm and Scenary, every thing ‘ indeed was uniform and of a Piece, and the Scenes ‘ were managed very dexterouſly; which calls on ‘ me to take Notice, that at the *Hay-Market* the ‘ Undertakers forgetting to change their Side-Scenes, we were preſented with a Proſpect of the ‘ Ocean in the midſt of a delightful Grove; and ‘ tho' the Gentlemen on the Stage had very much ‘ contributed to the Beauty of the Grove by walking up and down between the Trees, I muſt own I ‘ was not a little aſtoniſh'd to ſee a well-dreſs'd ‘ young Fellow in a full-bottom'd Wigg, appear in ‘ the Midſt of the Sea, and without any viſible ‘ Concern taking Snuff.

‘ I ſhall only obſerve one thing further, in which ‘ both Dramas agree; which is, that by the Squeak ‘ of their Voices the Heroes of each are Eunuchs; ‘ and as the Wit in both Pieces are equal, I muſt ‘ prefer the Performance of Mr. *Powell*, becauſe it is ‘ in our own Language.

I am, &c.

ADVERTISEMENT.

On the firſt of April *will be performed at the Play-houſe in the* Hay-maaket *an Opera call'd* The Cruelty of Atreus. N.B. *The Scene wherein* Thyeſtes *eats his own Children, is to be performed by the famous Mr* Pſalmanazar, *lately arrived from* Formoſa: *The whole Supper being ſet to Kettle-drums.*

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